



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

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To: The Acting Secretary
From: EUR - Walter J. Stoessgen, Jr.

Post-Apollo Cooperation with the Europeans

Background

The idea of encouraging European participation in the post-Apollo Space program dates back to 1969, when Tom Paine, then Administrator of NASA, visited the major European capitals to invite such participation. In 1970 and 1971 US officials led by Under Secretary Johnson met with European ministers to discuss the matter in detail. During this period we encouraged the Europeans' interest in participation in the development of parts of the Shuttle, in one or more Research Application Modules (labs to be carried into orbit by the Shuttle), and especially in the Tug (a vehicle to be carried aloft in the Shuttle and used for operations at greater distances from the earth than can be reached with the Shuttle).

By the time of the Presidential decision of February 1972 to proceed with the Shuttle program, various factors caused the US to become less interested in substantial European participation in the Shuttle and Tug. This position was reflected in a White House decision of June 1972 to foreclose European development of the Tug, discourage their construction of Shuttle parts and welcome their development of a RAM. The decision was conveyed to a delegation at the deputy minister level from the European Space Conference (ESC), which visited Washington later that month.

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Since then the Europeans have not been able to resolve their differences and have postponed holding an ESC ministerial meeting several times. Von Dohnanyi, the German Minister of Science and Education, has thus far been unsuccessful in his attempts to persuade his French and British colleagues, Charbonnel and Heseltine, to agree to participation in the post-Apollo program. He visited Washington in September to request a high level reaffirmation of our launch assurance policy as a means of enhancing support for post-Apollo cooperation.

Due to the scheduling requirements of the Shuttle program, we have requested the Europeans to reach a decision in principle by November on whether they will undertake development of the RAM (Sortie lab) but have told them that if further studies indicate that their part of the program will exceed estimated costs (\$250 million), they may still back out by August 1973.

Issues

The Europeans have been unable to reach a decision because of their varying interests in a space program and their apparent conclusion that post-Apollo cooperation and development of their own launcher are mutually exclusive. Of the major states in the ESC, the FRG has been most interested in our offer. The Germans have decided that they would gain more technologically from modest participation in the most advanced space project under development than they would from cooperating in the development of a European launcher, Europa III, which would be inferior to US launchers developed in the mid-1960's. The French are motivated more by political objectives - in particular a desire for independence from the US enabling them to launch any satellites they might wish. The French may also hope that work on a space launcher will assist the development of their next generation of military missiles. The British hold views similar to those of the Germans on Europa III, but have recently become less enthusiastic about post-Apollo cooperation. As the prospective European task became

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smaller and involved less sophisticated technology, the British interest in the program for its technological spin-offs has waned.

As a result of this trade-off between Europa III and post-Apollo, the Germans have told us that more forthcoming attitudes on launch assurances and other cooperative space ventures might convince other European countries that they could rely on the US and need not develop their own launcher. The US Government has taken steps to move the Aeronautical Satellite program along and in response to German urging has just issued a high level reaffirmation of our launch assurance policy.

In the event that no agreement can be reached within the ESC, the Germans have indicated that they would be interested in the possibility of bilateral cooperation with the US. They have asked us for a signal that we would be receptive to such an approach. Thus far we have maintained our position that because our objectives in the cooperative aspect of this program have a high political content, we would prefer to cooperate with a broadly based European group, including France, Germany and the UK. The question of our further response to the German proposal is now under consideration in the Department and we expect to submit a recommendation on this point soon.

The President will be making a statement on post-Apollo launch assistance on Monday, October 9. A copy of the Department's cable containing the text of the statement is attached.

Attachment:

State 182573

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Drafted: EUR/RPE:ATLiebowitz:lgs *ar*
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